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WelcomeBC

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2007AG0038-001436
Nov. 9, 2007

Ministry of Attorney General
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Advanced Education

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS TRAINING EXPANDED

VICTORIA – Immigrants in six areas of British Columbia will have better access to intermediate English language skills training for employment, Attorney General and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism Wally Oppal, Education Minister Shirley Bond and Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell announced today.

"These programs will help B.C. immigrants to obtain language training so they are able to be part of the strong economic and business growth we are enjoying in this province," said Oppal. "We want newcomers to have the language skills they require to enter the workforce and participate more fully in their communities."

Around $8 million will be provided for 17 English language services for adults (ELSA) level four and five programs. Proposals for training programs were accepted for the North Shore, Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, New Westminster, Tri-cities, Richmond, Surrey and Abbotsford areas.

They were among 46 proposals submitted by 21 organizations in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley communities. All proposals were reviewed according to pre-determined criteria and contracts assigned based on these assessments. Classes will start as early as this fall.

"These new programs, along with ESL training delivered by B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions, offer immigrants more choices as they work on upgrading their English skills," said Coell, who has responsibility for adult literacy. "For newcomers in smaller, more remote communities, we're also providing one-on-one ESL tutoring this year for the first time, with the help of federal funding."

"Improving literacy at the community level is essential to building a strong, vibrant province," said Bond, also Minister responsible for Early Learning and Literacy. "This funding will help our newest British Columbians to achieve their best."

Contracting for ELSA levels 4 & 5 courses for communities outside of the Metro Vancouver area has already taken place.

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The announcement is part of the WelcomeBC initiative to help immigrants moving to B.C. access existing and expanded services under one umbrella to assist them in better adapting to life in their new communities.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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